

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

Office of the Spokesperson

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For Immediate Release

STATEMENT BY JOHN KIRBY, SPOKESPERSON

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Signing of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement in Burma

The United States commends all sides for their ongoing efforts to bring an end to the longest-running civil conflict in the world. The signing of the text of the Nationwide Ceasefire Agreement (NCA) by the government and eight ethnic armed groups is a critical first step in a long process of building a sustainable and just peace in Burma. We recognize that some groups were not able to sign today, and we understand and respect their concerns.. We welcome their commitment to continue discussions within their communities and with the government about the necessary conditions for signing at a future date, and we urge the government to engage constructively in a dialogue with these groups to pursue a more inclusive peace.

We call on all NCA signatories to adhere to the spirit and letter of the agreement they have signed today. Military action undertaken by or against any signatory or non-signatory to this agreement undermines the trust-building necessary for lasting peace, stability, and security for all.

Dialogue among all parties will be essential to ensuring continued progress toward national trust-building and lasting peace. We urge all parties to continue to engage with each other and civil society representatives in the spirit of unity and compromise, particularly in the process to finalize a political dialogue framework and the conduct of the political dialogue itself. We expect all groups that continue to pursue peace through dialogue to be allowed to do so without exception or threat of penalty. We remain concerned by reports of continued military offensives in Kachin and Shan States and the lack of humanitarian access to many of the more than 100,000 internally displaced persons in those areas. We strongly urge all parties to honor their commitment to ensure unfettered access for humanitarian assistance to all those in need, without exception or delay.

The United States will watch closely and support full implementation of all agreements, the NCA, existing bilateral ceasefires, and the political dialogue that follows. We remain committed to the historic process of peace building and national reconciliation in Burma in the months and years to come.